

Testimony of Olivia Carnegie of Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice

February 5, 2014

Testimony in support of Bill 5653, An Act Concerning Children's Exposure to Chemicals

I would like to begin by thanking all the members of the Children's Committee for giving me this opportunity to testify. My name is Olivia Carnegie, and I write this testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice, the people that we serve, and as an advocate for all residents of Connecticut. I would like to draw your attention to the legitimate concerns about toxic chemicals, and to tell you why I believe that it is very important to have this bill passed.

Numerous research studies have found that when a fetus is in the womb it is exposed to toxic chemicals that are in consumer products consumed by the mother. Think about the risk and dangers that this imposes on a developing fetus. During pregnancy, mothers and their fetuses are exposed to toxic chemicals in the foods they eat, the cosmetic products they use, the household cleaning supplies, medication and many other ways.

Furthermore, today we are seeing that many children are being born with various birth defects and diseases. Think about your own family; does anyone suffer from leukemia, learning and behavioral disorders like ADHD and autism spectrum disorders, reproductive disorders including early puberty and infertility, breast cancers, prostate, thyroid and kidney, obesity, insulin-resistance and diabetes? Well, these are all diseases that are thought to be linked to exposure of toxic chemicals.

When my nephew was diagnosed with autism, the doctors informed my sister of the many different potential causes of autism including the exposure to toxic chemicals.

Researchers have concluded that...

- Incidences of childhood brain cancer and leukemia have increased 20% since the 1970s.
- There is a dramatic rise in learning and behavioral disorders.
- There has been a tenfold increase in Autism Spectrum Disorders in the last 15 years.
- There are significant increase in the rates of reproductive disorders, asthma, and diabetes.

Like many others, I believe that currently the federal law regulating chemicals in consumer products is completely inadequate to protect public health, particularly of a developing fetus and children.

I can foresee how passing this law can help protect our children by lowering their risk of exposure. If parents become knowledgeable about the chemicals that are considered to be toxic

then they would take preventative measures not to use these chemicals, especially when they are pregnant.

This bill will only require the Department of Public Health to identify chemicals of concern to children based on toxicity and exposure hazard, and to make recommendations for action to the general assembly every two years.

The fiscal impact to the state is negligible so nothing should stop us for having this law passed. As for CT businesses that use identified chemicals, they can and should work with the Chemical Innovations Institute to find safer alternatives. This will also advance green chemistry in the state and could grow jobs.

We need bill 5653 to help protect our children from toxic exposure in the products we use every day!